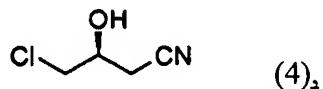


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A process for preparing 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile of formula:



, comprising the step of

1) reacting epichlorohydrin of formula:



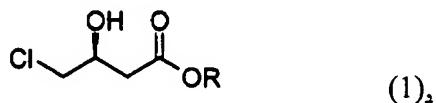
with a cyanide of formula:



, wherein M is a cation, and n is an integer of 1 to 3,

under the condition of pH ranging from 7 to 8, to form the 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile of formula (4).

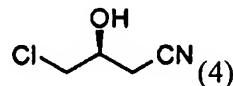
2. (currently amended): A process for preparing 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutanoic acid ester of formula:



, wherein R is C₁₋₄alkyl,

comprising the step of

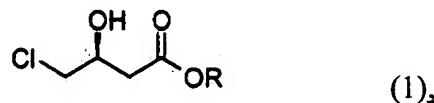
2a) dissolving 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile of formula:



in an alcoholic solvent, and then, reacting it with hydrogen chloride, or

2b) reacting the 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile of formula (4) in an alcoholic solvent saturated with hydrogen chloride,
to form the 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutanoic acid ester of formula (1).

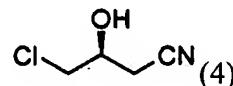
3. (currently amended): A process for preparing 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutanoic acid ester of formula:



wherein R is C₁₋₄alkyl,

comprising the step of

2a) dissolving 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile of formula:



in an alcoholic solvent, and then, reacting it with hydrogen chloride, or

2b) reacting the 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile of formula (4) in an alcoholic solvent saturated with hydrogen chloride,
to form the 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutanoic acid ester of formula (1) as defined in Claim 2,

comprising the steps of:

1) reacting epichlorohydrin of formula:

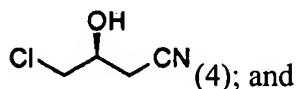


with a cyanide of formula:



wherein M is a cation, and n is an integer of 1 to 3,

under the condition of pH ranging from 7 to 8, to form the 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile of formula (4) and n are each as defined in Claim 1,
under the condition of pH ranging from 7 to 8, to form 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile
of formula:



2a) dissolving 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile of formula (4) in an alcoholic solvent,
and then, reacting it with hydrogen chloride, or
2b) reacting 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile of formula (4) in an alcoholic solvent
saturated with hydrogen chloride, to form the 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutanoic acid ester of formula
(1).

4. (currently amended): The process of Claim 1 or 3, wherein the pH is adjusted in
the range of 7.3 to 7.8.

5. (currently amended): The process of Claim 1-~~or~~3, wherein the pH is adjusted by adding an inorganic acid to the cyanide solution, and then, epichlorohydrin is added thereto.

6. (original): The process of Claim 5, wherein the inorganic acid is selected from the group consisting of hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, sulfuric acid, sulfonic acid, and phosphoric acid.

7. (original): The process of Claim 6, wherein the inorganic acid is sulfuric acid or concentrated hydrochloric acid.

8. (currently amended): The process of Claim 1-~~or~~3, wherein the cyanide is sodium cyanide or potassium cyanide.

9. (currently amended): The process of Claim 2-~~or~~3, wherein the alcoholic solvent is methanol or ethanol.

10. (currently amended): The process of Claim 2-~~or~~3, wherein the hydrogen chloride is anhydrous hydrogen chloride gas.

11. (currently amended): The process of Claim 2-~~or~~3, wherein the weight-by-weight ratio of the alcoholic solvent to 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile is in the range of 1.5:1 to 2.5:1.

12. (currently amended): The process of ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3~~Claim 1, wherein epichlorohydrin or 4-hydroxybutyronitrile has optical activity.

13. (new): The process of Claim 3, wherein the pH is adjusted in the range of 7.3 to 7.8.

14. (new): The process of Claim 3, wherein the pH is adjusted by adding an inorganic acid to the cyanide solution, and then, epichlorohydrin is added thereto.

15. (new): The process of Claim 3, wherein the cyanide is sodium cyanide or potassium cyanide.

16. (new): The process of Claim 3, wherein the alcoholic solvent is methanol or ethanol.

17. (new): The process of Claim 3, wherein the hydrogen chloride is anhydrous hydrogen chloride gas.

18. (new): The process of Claim 3, wherein the weight-by-weight ratio of the alcoholic solvent to 4-chloro-3-hydroxybutyronitrile is in the range of 1.5:1 to 2.5:1.

19. (new): The process of Claim 2, wherein epichlorohydrin or 4-hydroxybutyronitrile has optical activity.

20. (new): The process of Claim 3, wherein epichlorohydrin or 4-hydroxybutyronitrile has optical activity.